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FUCHSIAS ~ PELARGONIUMS ~ GERANIUMS

A FEW HINTS ON THE PROPER CARE OF FUCHSIAS

OF THE MORE THAN 5,000 VARIETIES OF FUCHSIAS GROWN TODAY BY VARIOUS NURSERYMEN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, SOME FIVE OR SIX HUNDRED VARIETIES ARE OUTSTANDING AND BECOMING MORE POPULAR FROM YEAR TO YEAR. MUCH BREEDING WORK IS BEING CARRIED ON EACH YEAR RESULTING IN NEWER AND BETTER INTRODUCTIONS FOR BOTH THE EXPERIENCED AND AMATEUR GARDENER.

FUCHSIAS HAVE A FEW PECULIARITIES, AS WELL AS OTHER PLANTS. THEY THRIVE IN A NORTHERN OR EASTERN EXPOSURE, SHELTERED FROM THE WIND. 50% SHADE IS IDEAL FOR MOST VARIETIES. SOME VARIETIES STAND CONSIDERABLE DRYNESS AND A GREAT DEAL OF SUN. WHEN USED AS POT PLANTS, THEY MAY BE POTTED IN A MIXTURE OF ONE-THIRD SAND, ONE-THIRD LEAF MOLD, ONE-THIRD PEET MOSS. THIS MIXTURE SHOULD BE ON THE ACID SIDE. ADDITIONAL FEEDINGS THROUGHOUT THE GROWING SEASON, WHICH IS FROM MARCH THROUGH AUGUST, OF SOME ORGANIC FERTILIZER TO KEEP THEM IN PROPER TRIM. WHERE THE CONDITION EXISTS THAT THE WATER TENDS TO ALKALIZE THE SOIL, ONE-HALF TEASPOONFUL SULPHUR MAY BE FED EACH PLANT ONCE A YEAR ABOUT JULY. THEY WILL GO DORMANT AND REST FOR SOME TWO MONTHS IN WINTER UNDER ALL CONDITIONS. THIS IS THE TIME WHEN WATER SHOULD BE WITHHELD AND ONLY ENOUGH ALLOWED TO KEEP THE WOOD PLUMP. IN SOME EXTREME CONDITIONS THEY LOSE ALL FOLIAGE. FROM JANUARY TO FEBRUARY IS THE PROPER PRUNING TIME. PLANTS SHOULD BE PRUNED HEAVILY, AND THEN AS NEW GROWTH STARTS ABOUT MARCH, THEY SHOULD BE PINCHED SO AS TO GROW IN THE PROPER SHAPE. ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND THAT FUCHSIAS BLOOM ON NEW WOOD, AND, OF COURSE, THE MORE NEW WOOD YOU PRODUCE, THE MORE BLOSSOMS.

HERE AT THE NURSERY WE GIVE THEM, ABOUT MAY, AN ADDITIONAL FEEDING OF ONE TABLESPOONFUL SUPERPHOSPHATE TO PRODUCE MORE AND LARGER BLOOMS. AFTER A GREAT MANY EXPERIMENTS, WE HAVE FOUND THIS TO BE HIGHLY SATISFACTORY. WE ALSO USE A LIQUID ORGANIC FERTILIZER FOR THE REGULAR SIX WEEKS FEEDING CARRIED ON THROUGHOUT THE GROWING SEASON. ONE PINT OF THIS LIQUID FERTILIZER MAKES 25 GALLONS. WE FEED THIS MIXTURE AT THE RATE OF ONE TEACUPFUL TO EACH SIX INCH POT. SAME PROPORTIONS MAY BE USED IF PLANTED IN THE GARDEN. DURING THE HEAVY BLOOMING PERIOD, THE FERTILIZER IS DISCONTINUED ALMOST ENTIRELY. IF THE BLOSSOMS DON'T SHOW WELL, WE FEED ABOUT HALF THE USUAL QUANTITY. FROM OCTOBER UNTIL ABOUT MID-FEBRUARY NO FEEDING OF ANY KIND IS DONE. FUCHSIAS USE THIS TIME FOR RESTING AND WE ALLOW THEM TO, SINCE WE HAVE FOUND THAT THIS IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF THE PLANT AS WELL AS MORE AND LARGER BLOSSOMS THE FOLLOWING SEASON. IN THE EVENT A FEW PLANTS ARE WANTED ESPECIALLY TO BLOOM AROUND CHRISTMAS, PRUNING MAY BE DONE ABOUT AUGUST, FEEDING HEAVILY AGAIN TO PRODUCE MORE NEW GROWTH. IN ADDITION TO THE FERTILIZATION, ABOUT ALL THAT IS NEEDED TO PROPERLY GROW FUCHSIAS IS AN OCCASIONAL SPRAYING WITH A FINE SPRAY FROM THE HOSE IN THE HOTTEST PARTS OF THE SUMMER. IN FACT, THIS SPRAYING, IF CARRIED OUT DAILY, DISCOURAGES THE FEW PESTS THAT MIGHT ATTACK FUCHSIAS, SUCH PESTS BEING THE RED SPIDER AND WHITE FLY. IF AN OCCASIONAL PLANT HAS SOME APHIS CARRIED TO IT BY THE ANTS, A SPRAY OF BLACK LEAF 40, ONE TEASPOONFUL TO ONE GALLON OF WATER WILL QUICKLY CONTROL THIS CONDITION.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO HAVE SOIL TESTING EQUIPMENT I MAY SAY THAT A PH 4.5 IS IDEAL. HOWEVER, THIS ACIDITY MAY GO AS LOW AS 6.5 AND THE PLANTS WILL CONTINUE TO THRIVE.

PROPAGATION OF MOST VARIETIES IS SIMPLE ENOUGH FOR THE AVERAGE GARDENER. CUTTINGS WILL STRIKE READILY AT ALMOST ANY SEASON. TO MAKE CUTTINGS, SIMPLY TAKE A PIECE JUST BELOW THE NODE ABOUT THREE INCHES LONG AND PUT IN SOME MOIST SAND. MAKE YOUR CUT ON A SLANT AS TO HAVE MORE WOOD. THIS CUT WILL CALLUS OVER, AND THE ROOTS COME OUT JUST ABOVE IT. FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO DESIRE, WE HAVE A COMPLETE SUPPLY OF THIS LIQUID ORGANIC FERTILIZER AT ALL TIMES, AND A COMPLETE SOIL ANALYSIS AND PLANT ADVISORY SERVICE HERE AT THE NURSERY. THE LIQUID FERTILIZER RETAILS AT 80¢ A PINT. THE SOIL ANALYSIS AND PLANT ADVISORY SERVICE IS REASONABLE, TOO.

HOPING THAT THIS LITTLE LEAFLET WILL GIVE YOU A GREAT DEAL OF INFORMATION AND LOTS OF PLEASURE TO MANY FUCHSIA LOVERS ALL OVER.

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